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ABSTRACT

This booklet is one of a series developed by the Northern Colorado Educational Board of Cooperative Services to make available to teachers ideas designed and tested by other teachers. The activities are gathered from educational journals as well as from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). The first section of the booklet contains activities for making four basic types of puppets. Since puppets can be fairly difficult to make, it is suggested that the art teacher assist in these projects. The second, larger section focuses on the use of puppets as an effective learning device. The activities are designed to motivate students to express themselves, to facilitate growth in the listening and speaking phases of language development, and to encourage communication and cooperation among class members. (TS)

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LEARNING WITH PUPPETS

Activity Ideas for Grades 1 - 4

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For
Northern Colorado Educational Board of Cooperative Services

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TO THE TEACHER:

It's not easy to be a teacher, to make each day alive and stimulating. We at NCEBOCS want to make your job a little easier. We've talked with teachers and learned that you especially need good ideas for activities, activities that students will enjoy while they learn the skills they need.

Learning with Puppets: Activity Ideas for Grades 1 - 4 is one of a series of booklets developed by NCEBOCS to make available to teachers ideas designed and tested by other teachers. We gather these ideas from educational journals as well as from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), a nationwide system of educational information supported by the National Institute of Education (NIE).

This idea book is divided into two sections. The first contains activities for making four basic types of puppets. Since puppets can be fairly difficult to make, we suggest that the art teacher be called upon for assistance.

The second, larger section focuses on the use of puppets as an effective learning device. The activities are designed to motivate students to express themselves, to facilitate growth in the listening and speaking phases of language development, and to encourage communication and cooperation between class members.

The purpose of this idea book is to present you with suggestions for activities. We hope you will modify some, create extensions for others, and jot down your own. As this booklet changes and grows, so will its utility and effectiveness for you.

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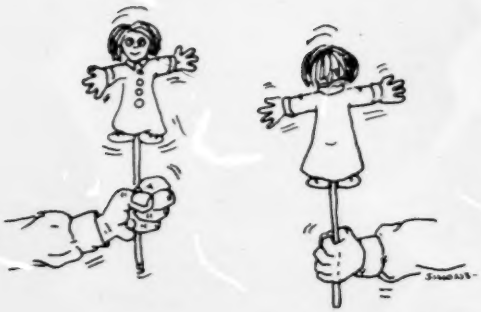
MAKING

PUPPETS

STICK PUPPETS



MATERIALS NEEDED: Manila or oaktag paper, wooden splints or heavy cardboard strips, colored paper, scissors, stapler, paints, brushes, crayons, paste, flathead paper fasteners.

TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS:

Bring to class at least one stick puppet. Discuss the following:

How many of you have seen puppets on TV? Did you enjoy them? What did they look like? What did they do?

This little fellow I have here is a stick puppet. Would you like to see what you can make him do? How about having him talk to the whole class?

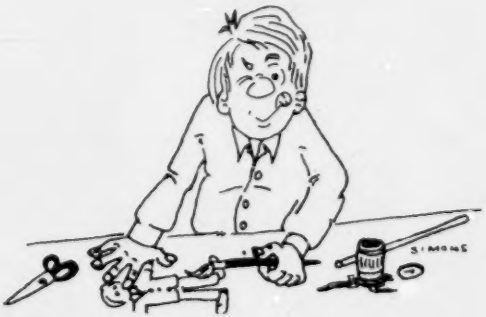
Would you all like to make your own stick puppets? How shall we start? You could draw or paint the puppet first, then cut it out, couldn't you? If you want everyone to see it, how big will you need to make your puppet on this paper?

Think about your puppet before you draw or paint it. Will it be jolly or sad or terrifying? How will you dress it? What colors will you use so it will be easy to see?

Here are some little sticks to use. See how carefully you can cut out your puppet and fasten it to the little stick. Would you like your puppet to be able to move its arms or legs? How do you suppose you could do this?

ACTIVITY: Have students draw or paint puppet characters. Cut out the drawing or painting and paste or staple the figure to a flat piece of cardboard. Be sure to cut a duplicate figure to represent the back view of the figure. Attach the character to a stick and make it "Come alive" by moving it up and down, around, and back and forth.

Divide students into pairs and let the puppet characters meet and learn about each other. Provide assistance to those students who have difficulty improvising dialogue.



PAPER BAG PUPPETS

MATERIALS NEEDED: Different sizes of square-topped paper bags, material for stuffing such as shredded newspaper or clean, discarded bits of cloth, colored paper, scissors, stapler, gummed paper tape, paints, brushes, crayons, assorted accessory material such as cord, string, yarn, rope, jute, wood shavings, and steel wool.

TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS:

Discuss the following:

I wonder if you could make a puppet from an ordinary paper bag or bags. What part will be the head? How big do you think the head should be? Will you stuff the head or leave it flat?

Now, what about the face? Where will the eyes, the nose, and mouth go? Are you going to draw them, paint them, or cut them out of paper?

Would you like to select some material for hair? How will you fasten the hair? Could you help us see more clearly who or what your puppet really is by giving it a costume? What colors will you use? What materials will you use?

ACTIVITY:

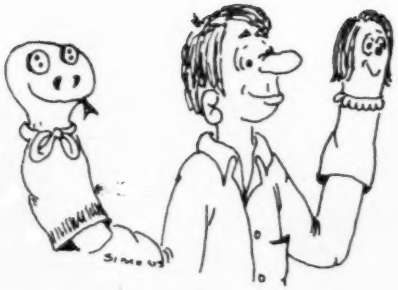
Have students experiment in making a puppet from one or more paper bags. Decide on the size of the head, exaggerating it for greater effect.

After stuffing the head, decide where to tie the neck area, leaving room for the insertion of a finger for manipulation. If only one bag forms the puppet, the string may be secured with scotch tape. If more than one bag is used, a cardboard core inserted inside the neck will make the puppet easier to handle.

Make the face with paint, crayon, colored paper, beads or buttons.

Then paint or paste on a costume for the puppet. Divide students into pairs and let the puppet characters meet and learn about each other. Provide assistance to those students who have difficulty improvising dialogue.

SOCK PUPPETS



MATERIALS NEEDED: Old clean socks or stockings, an assortment of accessory materials such as buttons, beads, yarns, pieces of fur, plain and printed cotton materials, feathers, fur, and lace.

TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS:

Bring to class two sock puppets.
Discuss the following:

How does a puppet differ from a doll?
Here are two sock puppets. Who would like to bring them to life and hear what they have to say to each other?
Would you like to make your own sock puppets? How shall we start? Think about your puppet before you draw or paint it. Will it be jolly or sad or terrifying? Will it be a person or an animal?

ACTIVITY: Have students experiment with colored socks. Decide which part of the sock will be the head. Have them select the materials needed for making the face, hair and costume. Help them to construct their puppets.

Begin with a sock.

Cut an oval shape from cardboard and fold it in the middle.

Insert the cardboard oval into the sock so that the ends of the cardboard come out to the end of the sock's toe.

Decorate sock puppet

Note: If you prefer, the toe of the sock can be slit open, the oval cardboard can be replaced with fabric in the shape of an oval. The fabric should then be sewn to the slit sock.

Slit the Sock.

Cut an oval shape out of another fabric.

Sew the oval fabric to the sock forming the inside of the puppet's mouth.

Decorate the Sock Puppet.

HAND PUPPETS

MATERIALS NEEDED: For the head: paper mache, sponges, foam rubber, potatoes
For the body: cloth

TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS:

Bring to class two hand puppets.

Discuss the following:

Here are two hand puppets. Who would like to bring them to life and hear what they have to say to each other?
Would you like to make your own hand puppets? How shall we start? Think about your puppet before you begin to make it. Will it be happy, sad, funny or terrifying? Will it be a person or an animal? What should the head be made out of if it is an animal? Should different materials be used if the puppet is a person?

ACTIVITY: Have students examine the hand puppets brought to class. Have them decide what their character will be like, and what materials will be used in making it. Help them to make their hand puppets.

NOTE: This type of puppet is fairly difficult to make, and the art teacher should be called upon for assistance.

LEARNING WITH

PUPPETS

PURPOSE: To provide students with the motion skills necessary for expressing themselves through puppets.

ACTIVITY: Have students put a puppet on one hand. Have them then bend the other arm at the elbow making a platform for the puppet. This will provide students with a simple stage for their puppets to walk on.

Next, ask students to experiment with puppet movement, making puppets fall over, dance, clap, whirl around, hop, stretch, sneeze, poke, yawn, and sleep.

PURPOSE: To provide students with the oral skills necessary for expressing themselves through puppets.

ACTIVITY: Have students practice using different puppet character voices.

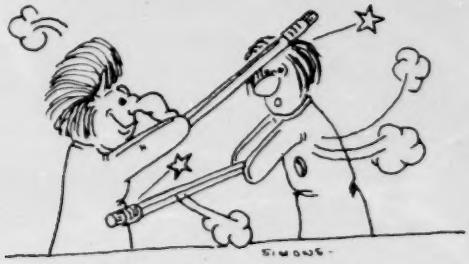
Identify a character and decide what kind of voice that character would have. For example, a big, bad wolf might have a deep voice and might growl between words. A silly rabbit might have a high pitched voice and hop around as it talked. Select several characters from children's literature and let students practice all of them. Once students feel comfortable with this exercise, they can be divided into pairs to practice their character's voices.

PURPOSE: To enable students to express emotions through their puppets.

ACTIVITY: To effectively communicate to the audience a puppet's movements and voice must sometimes be exaggerated. Discuss various emotions with the class.(For example hate, fear, love, affection, anger, happiness) Then have students experiment with motions and voices that would communicate each of these emotions to the audience.

For example, a loving puppet would move slowly, put his arms around other puppets, kiss them, snuggle up to them, etc. A loving puppet would talk softly and sweetly.

Ask students if it is possible to express an emotion in more than one way. For example, a puppet expressing hate might go into a rage, or it might be very cool and stern.



PURPOSE: To motivate students to listen critically to music.

ACTIVITY: Select and play for students different types of music (fast, slow, happy, sad, popular, classical)

Provide each student with a puppet. As a selection is being played, encourage each student to make his puppet react to the music.

(Continued)

Consider such questions as the following:

How does the music make you feel?
Of what does it make you think?
What does it make you want to do?

PURPOSE: To motivate students to listen critically to music.

ACTIVITY: After students have decided to do a puppet show, have them select the background music. Different music may be needed for different scenes.

Consider the following:

1. Should the tempo be fast or slow?
2. Would the music be happy or sad? silly or serious?
3. Have students suggest appropriate selections. Then play and analyze music to determine if it is in fact appropriate.

PURPOSE: To improve understanding of both current and past events.

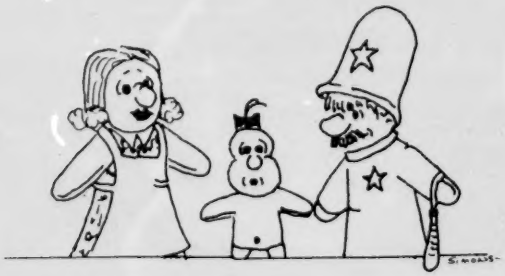
ACTIVITY: After students have completed a social studies lesson or talked about a current news event, have them spontaneously dramatize the event with their puppets. To do this they will have to understand the characters involved as well as the setting.

Possible topics might include community life, relationships within the family, a holiday, the need for conserving energy, etc.

Note: This is one evaluation technique that will clearly reveal the students understanding of a situation.

PURPOSE: To develop problem solving skills

ACTIVITY: Have students begin reading a story in which a character is troubled by a problem. After the situation and character have been established, but before the solution is reached, have students take the parts of characters in the story. With their puppets, ask them to stage the ending of the story. Have the class then read the ending of the story and discuss how and why the endings varied.



PURPOSE: To create an awareness of the need for rules in school and at home.

ACTIVITY: Ask students to discuss rules that their parents and teachers make them follow. Focus on one rule and identify the characters involved. Ask students to stage with their puppets what would happen if the rules were not followed.

For example: Running out into the street. The characters involved might be a child, a parent who tells him not to run into the street, the driver of a car and an ambulance driver. If the rule was not followed, the child might be hit by the car.

PURPOSE: To help students deal with interpersonal problems.

ACTIVITY: Focus on situations that are of concern to students. These will vary from school to school and from student to student.

The following are examples of these types of situations:

1. A child who wants to be someone's friend and is not accepted.

2. Fear of doing poorly in school.

3. Problems with the teacher-pupil relationship.

4. Sibling rivalry.

Help the students to focus on a problem situation. Identify the people involved in the situation. Have them then take parts and through their puppets, act out the solution to the problem.

PURPOSE: To improve the self concept of students who read below their grade level.

ACTIVITY: Students who have difficulty reading often feel inadequate or uncomfortable reading aloud. When these students are reading aloud, ask each of them to keep a puppet on one hand. If possible, the puppet should be one with which they are familiar or one which they like. When the child has difficulty reading, blame the puppet for the mistake. After the teacher has corrected the puppet, ask the student to also correct the puppet and explain to it why it had made the mistake.

Note: Some teachers have found it useful to provide slow readers with a puppet to keep them company as they read. When slow readers come to a difficult passage, the student and his puppet (along with a little help from the teacher) can make it successfully through the passage.

PURPOSE: To improve reading comprehension.

ACTIVITY: After students have had some experience with puppets, encourage them to look for future puppet characters and plot situations in every story they read.

(Continued)

Consider such questions as the following:

1. Who were the main characters in the story?
2. Which ones did you like or dislike? Why?
3. If the characters were real and could come to school with you, which would you choose?
4. Would it be fun to be one of these characters?
5. Would you like to do what they did?
6. How could we make up a puppet play about this story?

PURPOSE: To motivate students to listen carefully and read aloud together.

ACTIVITY: Select a play or a story with a large amount of dialogue. Assign one student the role of narrator. Ask others to volunteer to have their puppets assume the identity of characters in the story.

Have the characters remain "behind stage" hidden from the rest of the class.

The narrator should begin reading the story, and each puppet character should take his place on stage saying his lines whenever appropriate. The rest of the class should be the audience.

Note: It is important to choose a story with which the children are familiar. If the students with puppet characters have difficulty knowing when it is their turn, it may be necessary to give them a cue.

PURPOSE: To create a short, impromtu play from a story read in class.

ACTIVITY: After students have finished reading a story, ask them to create a short puppet play based on what they have just read. Students can take turns acting out the story using their puppets. Encourage them to make their puppets sound and move like the characters in the story.

Note: If a large number of puppets are not available to students, very simple finger puppets could be made in 10-15 minutes.

20 B

PURPOSE: To plan and produce a puppet play.

ACTIVITY: To produce a play, students will need to consider the dialogue or content of the play, scenery for the stage, lighting effects, music and sound effects and the puppets themselves.

The Dialogue or Content of the Play: The teacher may choose to bring in a play written at the level of students in the class, or students may write their own play based on a story or real life situation.

The Scenery for the Stage: Students will need to consider the following questions:

1. How many scenes will there be?
2. What will be the setting and the desired effect of each?
3. What colors will be used?
4. Will you need properties such as furniture, cars, rocks, trees or houses?
5. What size should all of the properties be?
6. Is the stage big enough?
7. How can we make a curtain for the stage?

Lighting Effects:

Should special lighting be used for certain scenes? (For example, light, dark, colored light)

Music and Sound Effects:

1. What sounds should be used in the play to emphasize the time, place or mood of a particular scene?
2. How can these sounds be created?

The Puppets:

1. Are there appropriate puppets available for each part, or will the class have to make some?

2. What should the puppets wear?

3. Who will be responsible for which part?

Note: The art teacher, the music teacher, the principal, and even parents can be asked to provide assistance. After students have planned the play and rehearsed it several times, it could be presented to other classes, the school, an open house, or a PTA meeting.

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* Note: See ED034795 from the ERIC system.